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SOURCE Newspaper and periodical as indicated.

VIEWS OF FRENCH COMMUNIST PARTY CRISIS

[Numbers in parentheses refer to appended sources.]

Jean Piat, Paris correspondent of the Socialist Belgian daily newspaper Le Peuple, analyzes in a report to that paper the internal difficulties and the electoral position of the Communist Party of France (CPF) as follows:

1. It is certain that Jacques Duclos himself is menaced by a purge.
2. The fight for the succession of Maurice Thorez, in the open since 1951, is now in full swing. The best chances to win the upper hand in the party are given to Etienne Fajon and Leon Mauvais, while Auguste Lecoeur, whom Thorez wanted to make his "dauphin," apparently does not carry much weight. If Lecoeur should fall, this would mean the downfall of Thorez' wife Jeannette Vermeersch.
3. In the past the internal disintegration of the party, as evidenced by the decrease of party and CGT (General Labor Confederation) membership and by the complete elimination in some areas of existing skeleton organizations, did not hurt the party in the general elections. According to Piat, the strange contradiction of internal weakness and strength at the polls will disappear in the future and the purge of Marty and Tillon "marks the beginning of the end of Bolshevism in France." Piat sees the signs for this development in the recent elections in the Seine, Seine Inferieure, and Nord regions where the Communists lost considerably in strength. Piat points out that the Communists had been unable in those elections to organize important public meetings because of lack of audiences and that improvised meetings in the large textile and metallurgical plants were ignored by the workers. Furthermore, the Socialist Party seems to gain in appeal with the workers; Socialist election posters, formerly often defaced, remained unmolested, and Socialist militants, especially from the industrial region of Lille-Roubaix-Tourcoing, report that never since 1946 had so many workers participated in the parades of the Socialist Party.(1)

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The Paris periodical B.E.I.P.I. (Bulletin de l'Association d'Etudes Informations Politiques Internationales) contends that the leadership of the CPF is split into two rival factions, with Billoux and Lecoeur in one camp and Fajon and Duclos in the other, while Mauvais appears in the role of conciliator. According to the periodical, none of the factions seems to have Moscow's exclusive blessing. Everyone seems to be awaiting Moscow's orders which would reveal its intentions as to who will be in effective leadership of the party and who will be purged. Orders from the Kremlin have not yet come through, the periodical states, and surmises that this might mean that Moscow is really embarrassed and wavers as it did in its reaction to the Indian plan for Korea. On the other hand, the periodical reasons that it would be quite in line with Moscow's tactics to let the contestants for power in the CPF fight each other until one or the other reveals himself as a traitor to the cause and indicts himself as a candidate for the next purge by making some wrong move.(2)

SOURCES

1. Brussels, Le Peuple, 19 Dec 52
2. Pan's, B.E.I.P.I., 1 - 15 Jan 53

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